

Dear John

By Nicholas Sparks

*Group name: Sincerely Savannah
(Leah Park, Corie Hahn, Edward Cho)*



Key Facts

Title: *Dear John*

Author: Nicholas Sparks

Genre: Contemporary novel

Date of Publication: 2006

Narrator: John Tyree

Point of View: John Tyree narrates in both first and third person. The book presents what Nick observes.

Tone: John's tone towards Savannah is always nostalgic and understanding.

Throughout the novel, he seems to control his temper well. He is calm and not as cruel as he could be. He is never ironic nor sarcastic. His tone could be seen as dull.

Setting (time): After 2000

Setting (place): North Carolina, US ; Iraq; Germany

Protagonist: John Tyree, Savannah Curtis

Major Conflict: John Tyree and Savannah Curtis fall in love. However, because John is stationed in Germany, he needs to leave Savannah for a while. The distance that is keeping them apart is the major conflict.

Rising Action: As time passes on, John and Savannah argue more. They contact each other less. They both know that their relationship is worsening as time goes by.

Climax: John gets a letter from Savannah which says that she fell in love with another man. Their relationship is over.

Falling Action: John's dad passes away.

Foreshadowing Discussed: Savannah's lessening number of letters sent to John foreshadows their soon-to-be over relationship. Even John had a bad feeling about it too.

Character List

Major Characters

1. John Tyree

John Tyree, the narrator of the novel Dear John was born in 1977 and grew up in Wilmington, North Carolina. John was always in motion and hated to be alone. School was like a social club with sports. John was very outgoing and taller than his father when he was in eight grade. He was very athletic as he was able to beat his father at wrestling when he was in middle school. John had brown hair and eyes and olive skin that would tan by May. He also had a crew cut that John and Savannah would talk about later in the novel. When he was young he started to care about sports, girls, cars, music, and spending little time at home. However when High school had started, John grew on to his rebellious stage and would cut classes, smoke, get suspended, and gave up on sports. During this stage, he had dated dozens of women. After he had dated Lucy and their break up, he soon joined the military and participated in the boot camp in Fort Benning. He was twenty years old and in late 1977 at the time. After he went in to the military, he had quit smoking and hadn't touched cigarettes in over two years. He moderated his drinking and his record was clean. He had become an officer candidate school (OCS) later on because people thought that he could really lead.

2. Savannah Lynn Curtis

In the novel when John first meets Savannah, she is described to be an attractive brunette that is a little younger than John. She was described as very beautiful and had a slightly gap-toothed smile. It also mentions in the novel that she has an accent. When

they had first met, Savannah was a junior in college and majoring in special education. Her laugh was described as being melodic and had dark eyes. She was twenty-one at the time. She does not drink alcohol and attends church every Sunday. Being a devoted christian in the family, her parents are very understanding and she has described herself as being sheltered during her childhood. Savannah later experienced a trauma that almost led her to be raped by a senior that attended in her college. It had given her a hard time and all of her friends made fun of her. Later when she falls in love with John, she later marries Tim because of the long distance for a long period of time.

3. Bill Tyree

Bill Tyree was John Tyree's father and he drove a mail delivery route for the post office. As described by his son, he is passive and introspective. He placed high on education. He had poor posture and tended to shuffle when he walked. He had sandy hair, hazel eyes, and freckles. He was socially awkward and quietest man John, his son had ever known. He was forty three when he had his first and last child, John Tyree. He lived for routine and did the same things such as he didn't date or spend weekend nights playing poker with his buddies. Bill was later found to have Aspergers although it was never proven in the book. Suffering from two heart attacks, Bill had passed away.

Minor Characters

1. Tim Wheddon

Tim Wheddon is described in the novel as being Savannah's close friend and has an autistic younger brother that is around twelve years old at the time. In the novel he serves as a character that shows friendliness, courtesy, and being considerate towards John even though they had just met. John later finds out that Tim Wheddon loves Savannah and finds out that after a couple of years, Tim and Savannah ends up being married. When Tim's parents had died in a car crash, he later becomes hospitalized for excessive bleeding. In the novel, his physical features state that he is shorter and much more paler than John and have short hair.

2. Lucy

In the novel, a girl named Lucy went out with John for several months, the second longest relationship that John had ever been in and she was a student in UNC wilmington. She was also a year older than John and wanted to work in New York after she had graduated. When she was breaking up with John, she had mentioned that John needs to go for something other than trying to destroy everything he could. Later, the two get reacquainted when Lucy comforts John when he is going through a rough time with Savannah.

Important Quotations

1. *“For a second, I wondered whether kissing her would break the spell we both were under, but it was too late to stop. And when her lips met mine, I knew that I could live to be a hundred and visit every country in the world, but nothing would ever compare to that single moment when I first kissed the girl of my dreams and knew that my love would last forever.” (Chapter 8, Pg 131)*

This quote is important because this is the part where John truly realizes that he has genuine feelings towards Savannah. It reflects the essence of one of the major themes which is love in the novel, Dear John. This is the scene where John and Savannah truly connect to each other and Savannah told him the story about her almost being raped by a senior in college. After that, he discusses how he got a bit angry and John was devoted to taking care of Savannah. Even though they would part, John would always know that he would love Savannah with all of his heart. Thus, the last sentence where it discusses that John's love would last forever shows that it would literally last that long as proven in the end of the novel.

2. *“We walked to the den together, and when I felt him place a gentle hand on my back, all I could think about was that I hadn't felt this close to him in years.” (Chapter 10, Pg 157)*

John had an interesting relationship with his father all throughout his life. He had never felt really close towards his father and would soon think about how his father did the same things on a day to day to basis. After Savannah had told him that his father might have Aspergers, John started to be more empathetic and took a liking to his father's coin collection which he prided himself on truly. After John had find out about his father's

syndrome, John talked to his father in that same empathetic way and have felt close to his father. This is the starting point where John feels something important to his father and from this quote, it foreshadows that their relationship is going to be stronger.

3. *“We made love a second time, and when Savannah finally fell asleep, I found myself staring at her. Everything about her was exquisitely peaceful, but for some reason, I couldn’t escape a nagging sense of dread. As tender and exciting as it had been, I couldn’t help wondering whether there had been a trace of desperation in our actions, as if we were both clinging to the hope that this would sustain our relationship through whatever the future would bring.” (Chapter 13, Pg 210)*

This is the scene where after John and Savannah make love for the second time. When he stares at her, he realizes that there is something wrong with their relationship. Because they are away from each other for a long period of time, they feel like they only made love for the reason that they want to stay together and they need a reason to be together even when they are away from each other. In this scene, it reflects also one of the most important themes which is the distance that separates them apart from each other. Since John is away at Germany most of the times, he and Savannah cannot meet for a long period of time and this hurts their relationship in the aspect that they can’t communicate with each other frequently and this will inevitably affect their relationship in a negative way.

4. *“”I mean it, Dad. I’m sorry about all the crappy things I put you through, and I’m sorry that I was never here for you enough. You’re the best person I’ve ever known.*

You're the only one who never got angry with me, you never judged me, and somehow you taught me more about life than any son could possibly ask. I'm sorry that I can't be here for you now, and I hate myself for doing this to me you. But I'm scared, Dad. I don't know what else to do.'" (Chapter 16, Pg 249)

This is the first time that John expresses his love towards his father through his words. John is not a very expressive person when it comes to love and it is hard for him to say all of these things. This is the scene right before John's father passes away and this is the important part where his father and John connects because John says all of the things he had wanted to say. All of those times when he had said that he did not understand his father, John and this is the first time where he truly expresses himself and this is the first time where he admits that he is scared. Hopefully after this scene, John realizes that there is nothing more to say about their relationship.

5. *"I knew there were words to comfort Savannah, but as usual, I didn't know what to say. All I knew was that she was the woman I'd once fallen in love with, the woman I still loved but could never have."* (Chapter 20, Pg 309)

After John had found out that Savannah had been married to another man, specifically Tim, John realizes that this is it. After they locked eyes together when they first met, John realizes that the woman that he loves will never be his anymore because she promised her life with another man forever even though Tim is sick at the moment. This is pivotal for one of the important theme which is acceptance of the fact that even though John loves her and no matter how much he tries, she has made her decision to be someone else's.

Themes and Symbols

Themes

True Love

Theme showing true love between John and Savannah and even Tim and Savannah is shown clearly in this piece of novel. As an example, by the end of the novel Tim accepts the truth that he will die soon and is already worried about Savannah's future. Because he truly loves Savannah, he is more worried about Savannah than himself. Though it may feel uncomfortable for him, he wants to choose Savannah's future husband so Savannah will not go through any hard time. This action that Tim took clearly represents true love that husbands can show from putting his love before himself. Another example of true love is Savannah and John meeting each other and not breaking over long distance relationships. They are not able to meet each other too often due to John's occupation and they both manage very well to love each other very consistently. Unless this relationship is built with true love this would have been impossible.

I think the author's intention of including these different scenes showing the power of true love was to show the people living in the modern society where people are forced to keep their personal feelings and expressions to each other. In this novel, the characters, though kept and covered under their occupations and personal reasons, express their feelings and act in a way to show their feelings directly. It is partially author's dream to make people freely show their love, and share the love with the important people around.

Love towards parents

Theme of love towards parents is very clearly shown as well in this novel. Before anything, it is important to note that John specifically stated that he wasn't too close with his own father. However, during the scene where John is angry at Savannah for stating words that might mean that his father has Asperger's disease, we can see that author was intending to show that though not too close, the relationship between a father and a son cannot be negligible. It is a bond that cannot be broken, and though John is not too close with him, he wants to make sure that his father is not offended or his father is orally demeaned. Another example of love between father and son is when John comes back from Germany to his hometown temporarily when his father goes through heart attack. Without a doubt, he flies to his hometown to take care of his father.

I think, as well as the other theme, the author intended to show many views that represents the love between father and son because he might have thought that the world is losing love between people too much. It is such a big head ache to think about how John explained that he wasn't a good friend with his father, but ends up listening that his father has gone through heart attack and comes right away to his hometown to see his father without hesitation.

Symbols

*Symbol of weather and obstacles against **True Love : Nature that may get in the way***

At the earlier part of the novel, when Savannah and John are spending good time inside Savannah's place where her group spends time, the weather changes very subtly and both of their mood does not get affected too much by the weather. This is supposed to represent the symbol of obstacles that may come against true love to prevent the two from sharing true love with each other. However, by the two characters not getting affected by the subtle change in the weather, readers can understand that the characters are seriously going through serious relationship and that the love being shared between the two characters are not jokes. In essence, John's occupation always gets in the way between two people. However, till the end of their relationship, the long distance relationship does not seem to affect their feelings towards each other too much. They fill their empty loneliness with hand-written letters and the obstacle is once again beaten by the true love of John and Savannah.

Authors intention of putting small details to give symbols is very simple. By giving the readers these symbollic signs of his intentions to help the readers understand the every small parts of the expressions the writer is trying to express, the readers can truly be falling in with the plot of the story. By falling in with the plot of the story, the readers have more access to the character's individual feelings. Therefore, the readers can fully understand how the characters are feeling at different moments.

*Barriers that may be against the love between **Son and Father: Symbolizes obstacles that people face every day that prevent people from achieving the small goals.***

As explained in the theme page, love between father and son is very well expressed in this novel. Though, John and his father are not too close to each other when there are cases where other may demean one of them they will be standing next to them. John always tries hard to have long conversations with his dad but fails all the time. This represents normal citizens having hard time reaching certain easy daily goals due to unexpected barriers. Another example may be the two heart attacks John's father had to go through before his death. This finally prevented John from expressing his true love towards his father and this may represent the natural disasters that may get in to people to prevent from reaching personal goals.

Author included these small events to be representing its own situations and feelings. Fragile little pieces of ideas are present in these detailed events and the signs are all connected to the theme overall. Love exists in different forms everywhere, however sharing the love sometimes may sound easy, but in the end there may be anything that may get in the way to prevent someone from sharing the love. I think this is the fundamental theme behind every pieces of this novel.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1:

The narrator is John Tyree. He is not only the narrator, but also the main character. John grew up in Wilmington, North Carolina. Like many other cities, Wilmington is rich in some places and poor in other. John lived with his dad ever since he was little. His dad had a steady job- he drove a mail delivery route or the post office. Thus when his friends were rich, he was not.

John starts to talk about the difference between his father and him. They are as different as two people could possibly be. John's dad was passive and introspective when John never liked to be alone. John also did not care much about school and education. John then just suspects that his mom met someone else. When he would ask about his mom, his dad just said that she realized she made a mistake in getting married so young. His dad is a rare one. He organizes and plans everything in advances, does the same thing such as cooking the same meal every single morning, and does not talk that much. He never yelled nor laid a hand on John when John was growing up either. John's dad usually spends most of his time alone. His greatest passion in life is collecting coins. All he does is sit in his den, study a coin dealer newspaper called the *Greysheet*, and try to figure out the next coin he should add to his collection. John then adds that it was his grandfather who originally started the coin collection. Although the coin collection is quite valuable, his family has barely spent money on anything else. For a coin, they would eat sausages for weeks. All John and his dad talked about was coins. When John was very young, he was also into coins so they used to have conversations a lot. However, as John was growing up, he started to think coins are stupid. Slowly, they had nothing to talk about.

When John was young, he was always embarrassed by the way his family was living. He was quite a rebel. Thus he gave up many things especially his grades. Even after high school graduation, John did not apply to college. When his dad found out about this, he locked himself in his den for the rest of the night. Later the next day, he tried to engage John in another discussion about coins thinking they are slowly drifting apart even more. John, sick and tired of hearing about coins the yelled at his dad to stop talking about coins. After that day, John can still remember the pained expressions on his dad after hearing it. A few days later, John realized that the only photograph of them was gone as well.

Years later, all John did was date girls and party. When he was dumped by a girl named Lucy, who he really loved, he realized that he was wasting his life. So he joined the military. His unit was first sent to Germany. Spending time in the army was good for John. He quit smoking and drank a lot less of alcohol. John was good at his job. His commanding officer even recommended him for Officer Candidate School.

John is back home on a break from the army. Having nothing to do, he goes out to the beach. He sees two girls, one tall and blonde, and the other an attractive brunette, both looking younger than him, walking up the pier. He keeps on watching them as they are with hanging out with two other guys. The brunette one seemed to attract him more. Suddenly, one of the guys knocks off the brunette's bag over the edge.

Chapter 2

Without hesitating, John jumps in to the water to get the bag. When he gives the bag to the Brunette, he felt something click when their eyes met. Soon or later, John starts to fall in love with her. They introduce themselves to each other. The brunette's name is Savannah Lynn Curtis. Savannah and John talk for a while and then Savannah invites John to a cookout that is going to be held in the town soon. Her friends are not as welcoming as her, but they still tell John to come. John accepts the offer. John and Savannah go back to the pier to get his board. As they are walking, they start to talk more about themselves. John finds out that Savannah came to the town for volunteering, Habitat for Humanity. She is staying there for a month to help build a couple of houses. She talks about a guy named Tim. He is basically the head of the group that she is associated with. He is also a really nice friend whom Savannah knew for a long time. John also finds out that she is a senior, majoring in special education at UNC.

They get to the house that the cookout is held at. The house is a meeting place and a hangout. Savannah leaves John to get food. Tim comes to talk to John. He is very nice, introducing himself first. Tim leaves and Savannah comes back. Savannah tells John why she is studying special education. She explains that she started to be interested in special education after she got to know Alan, an autistic kid who is also a younger brother of Tim. When no one knew what to do with him, she felt bad so she decided to study special education.

Later, Tim drops John off at his house.

Chapter 3

It's a Sunday morning. John and Savannah go to the beach to surf. As Savannah learns how to surf, John watches Savannah from the back. Despite the difference between them, John can't look away. He now thinks that he is in trouble. He is starting to fall in love with her.

They get out of the water and head to the house. There, they sit outside sipping their coffee. Savannah asks John if he goes to church. John admits and says that he has not been to church in years. She asks him to go with her later that day, offering him Tim's clothes to wear to church. John accepts Savannah's offer.

John, Savannah, and Tim go to church. After service, they go back to the house and change into casual clothes. Savannah changes into her bikini, looking beautiful. Then they go off to surf again. After spending time in water, they lay down on the beach. Savannah asks John to talk about himself more. She asks him about the tattoos he has on his back. He explains each one of them, telling her the reason why he got it and the meaning of it. They also start to talk about coins and John's dad. John even tells Savannah that he and his dad have always been strangers. John then asks Savannah out on a date later in the afternoon.

Chapter 4

John gets back home and feels guilty that he has not spent any time with his dad over the weekend. So he goes to his dad's desk and starts to talk to him. John tells his dad about Savannah, telling her how great she is. The conversation does not last long. Then he asks his dad for the car keys.

John picks Savannah up from the house. They go to a place called the Shrimp Shack in downtown Wilmington. It's a restaurant that John used to go on special occasions when he was younger. While eating, John asks Savannah to tell him more about herself. Savannah starts to talk about her parents. They have been married for 25 years and they're still a happy couple. They met in college and since then, they have been together. She also starts to talk about how she started to like horses. Her mom gave her this statue of a horse when she was really little, and that was when the whole thing started. She got her first horse, Slocum, on Christmas when she was eight. She was also a really good student with all A's when she was in school.

After dinner, they head back to the house and the beach later. They are both amazed at how they feel like they know so much about each other and feel like they have known each other for much longer when they have just met a day ago. Savannah starts to talk about how naive she is. She says that usually when two people are together, she does not think that they will end up hooking up later behind the dunes when usually, many couples do. She tells John more about how conservative she is by telling him about how she feels when she hears about people having sex when they do not know each other well. She thinks people should save things like that for someone they love.

Time passes by and when it gets late, they decide to head back home. They decide to meet again. Savannah gives John a kiss on his cheek and tells him that she had a really good time.

Chapter 5&6

Next morning, John eats breakfast with his dad. They talk about the date John had with Savannah. Again, the conversation does not last long.

John goes out, thinking what to do. Then he decides to head to Leroy's. A bar that used to be a hangout when he was younger. As John stepped into the bar, Leroy was there recognizing John. Leroy gives John a drink and moves onto another customer. A moment later, John feels a hand on his shoulder. It was an old friend of his, Toby. He hated seeing his old friends. Toby starts to talk to John about his life that is the same as before. Toby also invites John to a party that is going to be held at Mandy's, a girl from John's past who didn't last long. Toby starts to talk more about the past. John hates it so much. He wants to leave his past behind and start a new life. So he leaves the bar fast.

At home, John decides to cook steak for dinner. When his dad comes back home, they start to eat and talk. They talk about Savannah even more. John tells his dad that Savannah wants to meet him. Then John starts to ask about his mom. It was the first time he has asked about her in years. His dad seems to avoid the answer by answering in a word or two. John knows that things would be awkward even more so he changes the topic.

The next day, John goes to the house to pick up Savannah. They are much more comfortable now. Hesitating on what to do for the day, Savannah asks John if they could go say hi to his father. John is kind of worried, but he accepts.

John and Savannah get to John's house. His dad, surprised, greets Savannah. Purposely, Savannah starts to talk about coins and asks him many questions about them. John's dad starts to tell Savannah about the trips that he has gone on to buy and

sell coins. During the whole time, John is just watching from the back. He can see that his dad was happy. The way his eyes gleamed as he pointed to a coin was different. After an hour, Savannah gives him a hug and leaves. John and Savannah then decide to go get cheeseburgers.

Chapter 7&8

As they are eating their burgers, they sit by the beach. They talk about how thankful they are to have met each other. Then suddenly, Savannah sees three creatures in the ocean riding the waves. John tells her that they are young porpoises. Amazed, Savannah stares at them for a long time. As the porpoises disappear into the ocean, John suggests that they head to another place now. They decide to go to the house that Savannah and the group have been working on.

At the site, Savannah shows John around. She tells him about the family's situation. Savannah seems to be overjoyed at the fact that she is showing him around. It makes John happy too.

Suddenly, it starts to rain. Lightning flashed. John tells Savannah that they should get going soon before the storm hits, but she tells him that she has always loved thunderstorms. They sit next to each other, holding each other closely, watching the storm. As time passes by, John wishes more and more that he was not stationed overseas and that he could see her everyday after this break he is on. Later, they Savannah asks him if he has ever been in love before. John replies saying, "I don't know." He explains that he liked his ex and cared about her, but when they were apart, he barely thought about her. He then asks Savannah the questions back. She replies with a no. However, she tells him the story of her past love in freshman year. There was a senior who tried to take advantage of her naiveness and use her for satisfaction. She then became a humiliation among girls.

After hearing this, John offers to punch him for her. She laughs and thanks him. Later, they talk more and after thinking how wonderful it is to have fallen in love with a

girl named Savannah Curtis, John whispers to her saying, "I love you." She tells him that she loves him back. And a second later, they start kissing.

Chapter 9

Savannah and John ends up staying out late. The next day, Savannah and John hang out again. After picking up something to eat, they go to John's house again. This time, Savannah and his dad seems to be a lot closer. Even on the next day, Savannah asks to visit his house again. On Sunday morning, they go to church again too. Surprisingly, John seems a lot happier after going to church.

Next day, John can't find Savannah at the house. He goes around the house to look for her. Then John sees Savannah out at the pier. Only that she is crying this time. John doesn't know what to do at first, but he decides to go talk to her. She explains why she was crying to him. She says that she didn't expect to fall in love with anyone. She didn't want to because she wasn't ready for it. But now that she is actually in love with John, she is afraid that everything will be all over once he leaves. John makes sure that everything will be the same even after he leaves. Then Savannah gives him a book that she bought. She makes John promise that he will read it before handing the book to him. The book was about autism and Asperger's. Savannah tells John to read it to get along better with his dad. John stiffens and asks her what the book has to do with his dad. She explains to him saying that his dad might have Asperger's because his symptoms are similar to others who have the disorder. John gets furious, trying to deny the fact that his dad really might have the disorder. In the very bottom of his heart, he knows it's true but he doesn't want to believe in it. He yells at Savannah asking if she was "observing" his dad the whole time she was at his house. Savannah answers with no, explaining her position further. John only gets more mad. He leaves the book and just storms towards his car. Near the house, Randy and Tim come up to John asking if

everything is okay. Randy, one of Savannah's friends, yell at John for making Savannah cry. When John is about to punch Randy, Tim tries to grab John to calm him down. At that moment, without any control, John just drives his elbow hard into Tim's solar plexus and then snaps Randy's hand. Savannah runs toward the house and stops the fight which was already over.

John moves quickly to the house and drives out of the area.

Chapter 10,11,12

After driving for miles, John goes back to the house. He thinks to himself, *is there a chance she might be right?*

The next day, Tim comes over to John's house. Right away, John apologizes about what he has done. Tim accepts John's apology and talks to John about Savannah's intentions saying that she was only trying to help. He talks about his experience with his brother, Alan who is autistic. At first, accepting the fact and especially hearing other people talk about it were not easy. However, it was the truth and the reality that he had to accept. He suggests John to do the same and accept Savannah's book to read and understand further about his dad. When his dad comes back from work later that night, John starts to study his father too. He then thinks more that Savannah might be right.

Next morning, John writes a note at the house for Savannah to see. He asks her to come out and meet up with him. Savannah comes to see him. John apologizes to Savannah for everything - to Savannah, Randy, and Tim. Savannah accepts the apology saying that she is the one that is sorry. She says that she talked to Tim about what happened after John left. Tim told her that she has no right to say what she said.

They spend time together the whole day and finally the last day before John leaves comes. They spend the first half of the day together. They promise to marry each other one day. However, while John is at the military, they promise to write and call each other as much as they can. They kissed and held each other close. Savannah starts to cry giving John an envelope with a letter that she has written earlier. They then say good bye to each other and John leaves to his house. At dinner with his dad, John does not have any energy to talk nor to eat. It is quieter than usual.

John leaves Wilmington the next morning. He opens the envelope that Savannah gave him last night. There is a picture of her in it and a letter. In the letter, she asks him to look at the sky on the first night of full moon and reminisce the memories they spent together. After reading the letter, John has tears in his eyes. All he wants to do is to go back and be in the place he was meant to be.

Time in the military seems to be passing by really slowly for John. John and Savannah write to each other as often as they can. They can e-mail as well, but Savannah prefers writing letters more. Every time John misses Savannah, he would take out her picture and stare at it. As time passed by, their love grew stronger. John also writes to his dad.

Days in Germany has not been fun. John has been getting hardcore training. Still, every night there is a full moon, John goes outside to watch it. As time goes on, John misses Savannah even more. Savannah is now already a graduate and is taking summer school for her master's degree.

Chapter 13

Finally, in June 2001, John is given his leave to go back home. At the airport, he is as nervous as he can ever be. Savannah is supposed to wait for him at the terminal gate. As soon as they see each other, they run toward each other and start kissing. They are able to feel their love getting stronger.

They leave the airport for her house. Her parents are already waiting for them. Her mother hugs John as soon as she sees him. They are both very welcoming. The next day, they all go horseback riding. It is John's first time. After spending lots of time together, they have gotten even closer. On Sunday, John attends church with Savannah's family. After a couple of days, John and Savannah leave the house to Chapel Hill where Savannah's apartment is at.

At night, Savannah and John are very close to making love that night. However, Savannah hesitates, apologizing to John that she is not ready yet. John says he is fine with it although he seems to be disappointed a bit. Still, they sleep together laying next to each other. The next few days fell into an easy pattern. Savannah would go to school early in the morning and come back in the afternoon and spend time with John. Meanwhile, John would wait for Savannah.

Little by little, John starts to realize that Savannah now has a completely different life than what she had before. She completely moved on without him. One day, John decides to prepare a nice dinner for Savannah. Thus he buys nice clothes and reserves a spot at a really expensive restaurant. However, Savannah comes home saying that she already made a dinner plan with her friends. John is fine with it so he just goes to the dinner with Savannah's plans. However, Savannah seems to be with her friends

constantly even when John is home. He finally gets mad at Savannah. He runs out of the house in a middle of the argument. When he gets back, he apologizes to Savannah saying that he shouldn't have been mad at her. However, Savannah instead apologizes too saying that she is sorry. She explains to him the reason why she has been acting that way lately. It is not because she doesn't like him anymore. It is rather because she loves him even more. The first time John went to Germany, Savannah had been very weak and depressed for a long time because she missed John too much. She just doesn't want that to repeat again. Thus she is also spending time with her friends even when John is home.

After they make up for the argument, they start kissing. Eventually, they make love. They do it for a couple of times. To John, life cannot get any better.

Chapter 14&15

John's remaining time in Chapel Hill is as he has originally expected. John and Savannah spend time alone as much as they can. They even go to the fancy restaurant that John has planned to go to for a long time.

On the morning of John's flight back to Germany, Savannah drops him off. They share their last kiss, holding each other tightly. On the plane, John knows that there is a difference in their relationship. So he prays that Savannah has been telling the truth to him. Back in Germany, John calls and writes to Savannah more frequently.

Then came September 11.

Everyone in the squad starts to reenlist, even John's closest friend Tony. John has also caught the fever and decides to reenlist. When he tells Savannah this news, she seems supportive. Time passes by and Savannah's letters starts to come every other week when it used to come every ten days. Being apart for too long is affecting their relationship for a big time.

One day, John gets a call from his commanding officer that his dad had a heart attack and is now in the hospital. Instead of going to Chapel Hill to spend time with Savannah, John goes back to his home and spends days with his dad. John takes care of his dad really well. From time to time, he would read the *Greysheet* and talk about coins and the latest news about them. Savannah comes to the hospital from time to time too.

Back in Germany, John and Savannah's relationship seems to be worse. Paranoid, John calls Savannah more often, but the number of calls she actually receives are less. John is now stationed in Iraq. His army life is not too entertaining. He can't sleep for days, is always on watch of the enemy, and is never safe.

After a really bad fight against the enemy, John and his squad comes back to their station. John then gets the first batch of mail in almost six weeks. There, he finds only one letter from Savannah.

In the letter, Savannah explains to him how much she has loved him and how much she prays for him all the time. However, she has fallen in love with someone else. She has not expected herself to do so, but life in Chapel Hill alone is too hard.

Chapter 16&17

As soon as he is done reading the letter, John crumples it up and throws it aside. He is incredibly angry and feels betrayed. He feels a strong hatred towards the nameless man who has taken Savannah away from him. From then on , John starts to sign up to any dangerous or life-threatening missions there are. After February 2004, John reups, but this time he is transferred to Germany. Life in Germany is as boring as it can be. With everyone in his squad changed, John is a loner again.

In summer, John gets to go back home again. This time, he devotes himself to his dad. He does things that would make his dad happy. They go for a 20 minute walks everyday, searches for new coins, and etc. His dad seems to be worse. Before going back to Germany, John promises his dad to contact him more often.

In March 2005, his dad has a second heart attack. This time, the heart attack led to pneumonia. When John goes back home, his dads condition is as bad as it can be. He is shocked by how much weight his dad lost. There were empty soup cans everywhere in the kitchen. His dad has not been eating for a long time because he never had the strength to. So John starts to clean the house. A neighbor who was supposed to take care of his dad comes by the next day to apologize. She says that her daughter was sick too so she had no time. John accepts the apology. She then talks to him about what she thinks John should do. She thinks John should send her dad to a place where he could be taken care of. After researching of the facility center, John brings up the topic of moving to his dad. His dad starts to cry as he hears this. It is the first time John has seen him cry. In the morning, John packs his dad's belongings. When he is done, he goes to his dad who is laying down on the couch. John's dad gives him a map, labeled "BACKYARD." He

then tells John to pick up a shovel and follow the directions on the map in the backyard. John later a box with all the coin collections and all of his dad's belongings that he has treasured.

On the last day before leaving, John visits his dad at the center. He insures his dad that everything is going to be alright. Before leaving, John for the first and last time of his life tells his dad how much he loves him. He also tells his dad that he has been an awesome father. That was the last time John ever saw his dad alive.

His dad passed away seven weeks later. John goes back to his house and in the door frame of the house, he finds a business card of a lawyer who claims to represent his dad. John calls the number and the next morning the lawyer shows up at the house. The lawyer introduces how he met John's dad. John's dad was his first client so he says that there is no charge for this. His dad has been gifting estate taxes to John ever since he was a little kid. The lawyer then gives him all the papers with John's dad's will, a list of every coin in the collection, including quality and the date of purchase, and all the arrangements for the funeral.

The funeral is very small. Not many people comes which breaks John's heart. After the ceremony is done, John lies down by his dad's bed. Later in the afternoon, surprisingly, Lucy, his ex, arrives. John tells her everything that has happened to him in the last 5 years. She cheers him up and leaves.

Chapter 18&19

The next day, John visits Savannah. He finds the ranch that she and her husband owns. The ranch's name is "Hope and Horses." John remembers Savannah telling him about wanting to own a ranch later to educate autistic kids. When Savannah sees John, she greets him welcomingly. She runs to him and hugs him. John tells her about his dad and the funeral. She apologizes to him for not having known about it. She tells John to help her with feeding the horses. While feeding the horses, they get into a conversation about each other's lives. Savannah, is not having such a wonderful time. The ranch is beautiful, but there is just so much work to do, especially taking care of the horses. When John asks her if the ranch is everything she thought it would be, she replies with a "sometimes." She explains that the ranch is not only hard to take care of, but is also costly. Also, she says that she should have learned more in school about autistic kids. They then go in the house to fill up their stomachs.

John notices that Savannah has changed in many ways. She drinks wine and even cooks. The reality seems to hit him one more time. They get into a deep conversation about their own lives and how they have been living. John tells Savannah about his adventurous life in Iraq and boring life in Germany. He also tells her about the times he spent with his dad and how much they had become closer. Savannah tells John about the busy life she had. Then Savannah tells John who her husband is. Tim. John asks to her to tell him all of the behind story to it. She starts off by explaining that it is not like they planned it. In early 2002, Savannah was having a really hard time. She missed John too much so she had no strength everyday. At the same time, Tim's parents died in a horrible accident. Thus they spent lots of time together, cheering each other up. Then,

little by little, they fell in love. Tim has always wanted to start a developmental evaluation center for kids as Savannah also did. They decided to start a weekend ranch program for autistic kids. And then the following year, he proposed. When John asks where Tim is, Savannah does not answer the question. She talks about another subject.

When it was time for John to go, Savannah greets him to the gate. Then she asks him to come back tomorrow morning at ten o'clock to meet Tim. John does not really want to see Tim, but it was impossible to turn her down. As John leaves the ranch, he watches Savannah in the rearview mirror and finds out that she was crying into her hands.

Chapter 20

The next morning, John arrives at Savannah's house. She doesn't explain to him where they are going, but they hop into the car and start driving. Right before arriving at the destination, Savannah tells him that it's the hospital.

John sees Tim laying in his bed. He looks exhausted and his skin is so pale. He lost even more weight than John's father had too. They greet each other and Tim right away tells John the disease he has. Melanoma. Savannah and Alan leave the room for Tim and John to talk. Tim then talks to John about the past. He first apologizes to John about what happened. After awhile, Tim falls asleep and Savannah comes back. Savannah and John leave the room to talk. Savannah tells John the details of Tim's disease. It is not just one disease. It started as a small mole in the back. After getting rid of it, that's when the virus and things started to spread throughout the body.

Savannah talks about the chances of Tim surviving. All the hospital is doing for Tim is interferon, which is not helping him at all. She talks about other medication and treatments that are available in other hospitals, but because of the cost, she can't dare to go. There are many fundraisers for Tim that has been going around in town for a while, but even with those, the cost for different, better treatment is not able to be paid.

Savannah and John leave the hospital and go to Savannah's house to eat dinner. She prepares lasagna. While eating, they talk more. Savannah tells John how glad she is that he came to see her. However, he only reacts to her by saying, "It's good." She gets disappointed and runs to the living room. Later, John hears Savannah crying. He goes over to her and she stops crying. She apologizes for crying and they start talking about the past they had together. Surprisingly, Savannah asks John more about the memories

they had together. They talk more on the couch and they get close enough and when they are about to kiss, Savannah spills wine on her clothes. She goes to change. Later, Alan suddenly comes back home and is making a loud noise. Alan is spazzing out. Savannah goes to calm him down. She hugs him and tell him how much she loves him and Tim. Alan is scared that he would lose Tim soon. Seeing this, John feels that he shouldn't have come again. So he leaves without saying goodbye.

Next morning, it is his last day before leaving. So he visits Tim at the hospital for the last time. There, Tim looks as if he is doing a lot better. Tim then talks about the future. Tim says that Savannah will eventually find a new husband after he dies. He hints John to be the one. He says that Savannah has always loved John. Even when they got married, she was never passionate about him as she was for John. After John leaves, he sees Savannah's car parked next to his in the parking lot. Savannah comes out of the car and asks him what he and Tim talked about. John asks Savannah to ask Tim herself. John says goodbye to Savannah mentioning that it will be the last time. He tells her that he doesn't want to ruin someone's marriage just because of his love. Tim loves her a lot so he tells her to focus on Tim. When he tells her that Tim is going to be okay, she cries and answers by saying that he can't promise that. She doesn't want things between them to be over like that. For the very last time, John tells Savannah how much he loves her. Savannah says, "I love you," back to John and says good-bye. They kiss and John leaves. While going back to the airport, John calls a coin dealer that he and his dad have known for a long time. John tries to sell the coin collection to the dealer.

Chapter Study Questions

Chapter 1

1. Where did John grow up from?

Answer: Wilmington, North Carolina

2. What was John's father's steady job during John's childhood?

Answer: He drove a mail delivery route or the post office.

3. What is father of John's greatest passion during John's childhood?

Collecting coins.

4. How did John end up realizing that he was wasting his life time?

Answer: When he was living without a purpose and all he did was date and party. He got dumped by this girl named Lucy and this started him to realize that he was living a life that was worthless.

Chapter 2

1. Where do John first meet Savannah?

Answer: John decides to go to the beach and meets two ladies and one of them happens to be Savannah.

2. What is Savannah's major?

She is majoring special education at UNC.

3. What is Tim's position?

Answer: Tim is the head of the group that Savannah is associated with. He is related to the Habitat for Humanity. Savannah volunteered to come.

4. How did Savannah start to decide to major special education?

Answer: She decided this when she first saw Alan, who is an autistic kid.

Chapter 3

1. Where does Savannah take John to in the beginning of the chapter?

Answer: Savannah takes John to the church after John admitting that he didn't have a chance to go to the church for a very long time.

2. What is Savannah and John drinking in front of the bench after their presence in the church?

Answer: Coffee

3. (True/False) John and Savannah talk about tattoos on John.

Chapter 4

1. What is the name of the restaurant that John takes Savannah to?

Answer: Shrimp Shack

2. What is so special about Shrimp Shack to John?

Answer: John used to go on special occasions when he was much younger.

3. What is the name of Savannah's first horse?

Answer: Slocum

Chapter 5

1. (True/False) John and his father's conversation always lasts long.

Answer: False, it lasts for a very short time.

2. Does John like meeting his old friends? Why or why not?

Answer: He does not meeting his friends from the past because he wants to remember nothing from the past and start a new life.

3. What is the name of the very old friend of John's that he meets?

Answer: Toby

Chapter 6

1. Is it John or Savannah who decides to meet John's father rather than just two of them meeting each other?

Answer: It was Savannah who was willing to meet John's father.

2. What does John's father mainly talk about in front of Savannah?

Answer: He mainly talks about his trips to places that he has gone to buy and sell different coins since his hobby is coin collecting.

3. At the end of this chapter, what do they want to go grab?

Answer: Cheese burger

Chapter 7

1. What are the creatures that John and Savannah finds at the beginning of the chapter?

Answer: Porpoises surfing, and looking at this, Savannah and John were both amazed.

2. Where do they decide to go after seeing the porpoises?

Answer: They decide to go to the house that Savannah and her group has been working on.

3. What is their mood, when Savannah is showing John around the place her group has been working on for a long time?

Answer: They are both overjoyed and they are glad to be with each other at the moment.

Chapter 8

1. What happens so suddenly at the beginning of the chapter that changed the mood?

Answer: The weather changed very subtly and lightning started to hit. However, weather change was not strong enough to separate the two apart.

2. What do John and Savannah talk about? (Probably one of the most important conversations in the book which forecasts what is going to happen in the future)

Answer: They talk about their past relationships with different people and how they were never really satisfied. This forecasts how their relationships will turn out to be very serious relationship.

3. How was Savannah's ex-boyfriend in her freshman year?

Answer: He was trying to use Savannah's naiveness and take advantage of her to use her for his satisfactions.

Chapter 9

1. After picking something to eat, where do John and Savannah end up heading to?

Answer: They decide to go to John's house.

2. Why is Savannah all of a sudden crying at John's house?

Answer: According to what Savannah said, she was crying because she was not expecting to fall in love with anyone for quite a long time.

3. What is the possible disease that John's father might be going through?

Answer: Aspergers disease.

Chapter 10

1. Does John end up accepting Savannah's apology?

Answer: Yes, John ends up accepting Savannah's apology and they fall true love, and this is mostly the part where John and Savannah "officially" love each others.

2. What kind of example is brought up by John when they are talking about people who are less blessed?

Answer: They are talking about Alan who suffers from Autism.

3. What change did Savannah bring to John's regular life?

Answer: John is observing his own father more closely.

Chapter 11

1. What action does Savannah carefully take according to what John's father is going through?

Answer: John is handed Savannah's book about the Asperger's disease and Savannah tells John that it is about time that he learned about the disease that his father is suffering from.

2. How did John's attitude about his father change?

Answer: Before his behaviors were only negative and did not believe in people saying anything negative about his father, but after this situation he slowly believes that his father might be actually suffering from the Asperger's disease.

3. (True/False) John finally apologize for his action about being angry about his father having the Asperger's disease.

Answer: True.

Chapter 12

1. What is the significance of the date of John's departure?

Answer: They spend the half of the day together and they promise each other to marry each other when John is finally back.

2. What does John do when he is missing Savannah very much?

Answer: He takes out the picture that Savannah gave him at the day of departure and looks at it for a long time.

3. Where is John staying at due to his military occupation?

Answer: He is currently staying at Germany at this time of the book.

Chapter 13

1. Where is Savannah supposed to be waiting for John when he comes back?

Answer: Savannah waits for John at the terminal gate. When they meet each other they run towards each other and hugs.

2. What do Savannah and John do on John's first day back?

Answer: They go horseback riding. It is John's first time trying this, and from this John and Savannah becomes even more closer to each other.

3. What do Savannah and John do on the following Sunday?

Answer: John, for the first time, attends church with Savannah's family. This is very significant as this is his first time spending time at church with Savannah's family.

Chapter 14

1. What was different on the last day of John's departure?

Answer: John feels something different from Savannah and wishes that Savannah has been telling him the truth. He is quite afraid that Savannah might be cheating on him.

2. How is Savannah changing by the time of John reenlisting?

Answer: Her letters are coming every two weeks when it used to come every ten days.

3. What does John's father go through during this chapter?

Answer: He has a heart attack and therefore John is given few days to go meet his father.

Chapter 15

1. How is the relationship between Savannah and John going during so many bad things happening around John?

Answer: Savannah contacting John is slowly and eventually decreasing and John is going through a very hard time due to Savannah's behavior.

2. How many letters from Savannah did John receive in the 6 week span of time?

Answer: One letter from Savannah.

3. What does Savannah decide to do?

Answer: She sent John a single letter saying that she has fallen in love with someone else.

Chapter 16

1. When does John's father have his second heart attack?

Answer: March 2005.

2. What has been happening at home?

Answer: Neighbor who was supposed to come everyday to take care of his dad, didn't come because of her daughter was too sick to take care of John's father.

3. What did John find at home filled with?

Answer: Empty soup cans which can represent the situation his father might've been like.

Chapter 17

1. How many weeks after taking to the center does John's dad pass away?

Answer: 7 weeks

2. How is John's father's funeral?

Answer: Not many people come to the funeral and the funeral itself is very small as well.

3. (True/False) John's ex, Lucy, arrives at the funeral.

Answer: True

Chapter 18

1. What is the name of Savannah and her husband's ranch?

Answer: "Hope and Horses"

2. How does Savannah feel about the work she has to do?

Answer: She is not really enjoying too much in the ranch since there are too many things that she must do to control so many things manually.

3. How is Savannah different than how she used to be when she was with John?

Answer: She did not used to eat any wine but now she does.

Chapter 19

1. Who is Savannah's husband?

Answer: Tim

2. How did Savannah meet her husband, Tim?

Answer: She missed John so much that she didn't have any energy by the early 2002, and that is when Tim's parents died due to a horrible accident. Since both of them went through a lot of hard times at that moment, they spent a lot of time together and eventually they fell in love.

3. (True/False) Savannah was crying when John left.

Answer: True

Chapter 20

1. What is the last thing that John offers to Savannah?

Answer: He jokes that the last thing Savannah can do for him is to buy his father's coin collection.

2. How big is the chance of Tim surviving?

Answer: It is very clear that Tim will be dying soon.

3. What does Tim tell John?

Answer: Tim is already worried about Savannah's future as he might die soon.

Therefore, he wants a new husband to be John since Tim is clear that John would do a job at that moment.